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The Life, trial, &c. of Robert Hallam

7 Dials [London]

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Title : The Life, trial, &c. of Robert Hallam, convicted at the last Hampshire Assizes, for the wilful murder of his wife, who was big with child, by inhumanly, barbarously, and cruelly beating her, and throwing her out of a one pair of stairs window : including his dying confessions; and the particulars of his behaviour, at the place of execution, &c. &c.

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The fatal Effects of Jealousy.

THE

Life, Trial, &c.

OF

Robert Hallam

Convicted at the last Hampshire Assizes, for the

Wilful Murder of his Wife,

WHO WAS BIG WITH CHILD,

By inhumanly, barbarously, and Cruelly Beating her, and throwing her out of a One Pair of Stairs, Window.

INCLUDING

His Dying Confessions;

And the Particulars of his Behaviour, at the Place of Execution, &c. &c.

J. Pitts, Printer, Wholesale Toy & Marble Ware house, 6, Great St. andrew Street, 7 Dials.

Trial, Execution, &c.

ROBERT HALLAM was indicted at the laſt Aſſizes, for Hampſhire, for the wilful Murder of Jane, his wife, ſhe being then big with child by throwing her out of a window, one pair of ſtairs high, upon a ſtone pavement, whereby ſhe received ſeveral mortal bruiſes, of which ſhe almoſt inſtantly died, December, 9th.

The firſt witneſs called, was Charles Bird, the priſoner's apprentice, who beiug ſworn, depoſed as follows: 'On Wednesday, Dec. 9, about 11 at night, I went to bed and fell aſleep, but was waked by a noiſe about half paſt 12. I heard my miſtreſs in the room under me cry, Murder! For God ſake don't murder me! pity me, for Chriſt's ſake for my poor family's ſake! Then ſhe called to me Charles Charles, Charles! And once ſhe cried louder than ordinary. The priſoner ſaid G—d d—n you what do you want with Charles? I was afraid he would come up to me, ſo I ſtept out of bed, and was going to get out of the window to ſave myſelf, when a child that lay with me, who was lame, and could not ſpeak plain, tho' it was 10 years old, cried Sharly Sharly, don't go,—So I went into bed again, I heard a great many violents blows which by the ſound I thought were giving by tongs or fire ſhovel Bye and bye, the neighbours cried, Murder, and I heard the ſtreet door open, I thought the people with out had broke it open, but preſently the priſo-

ner came up ſtairs into his chamber. I knew it was he, becauſe I heard him ſcolding again, I got up about ſix in the morning, and as I was going down ſtairs, I heard a low voice, which I thought was my miſtreſs's, and, it ſaid, Charles ſtrike a light and draw ſome beer in the tin pot. I did ſo, and brought it up, and the voice ſaid, ſet it down upon the cheſt, which I did, but I neither ſaw his nor her face, for they were both covered in the bed. Then the voice bid me make a fire, and I made one, and while I was blowing it up, I heard two or three diſmal groans. This was between ſix and ſeven in the morning, and then I went to work at our plying place. The priſoner is a waterman, and I am his apprentice. About eight o'clock John Allen came and told me my miſtreſs was dead. Then I have loſt a good miſtreſs ſays I. He then ran home and ſaw the doctor and a conſtable, with the priſoner, and found it was too true that his miſtreſs was dead indeed.

Ann Anderſon next ſworn—I live at the next door to the priſoner; there is only a thin deal partition betwixt his room and mine. Between ten and one that night I heard him ſay to his wife God d—n you, tell me the truth I waked my husband and ſaid, Hallam's beating his wife, according to cuſtom. She got from him and run down ſtairs and out at the ſtreet door, he followed, I open'd my window, and ſaw him beat her in the ſtreet and forced her in again. He ſhut the door, and while ſhe was in the entry, called Charles, Charles! When hey came into the chamber again, I heard a great many unmerciful blows, which by the ſound,

thought were given by the fire ſhovel or tongs ; as if her breath was almoſt gone; ſhe cried Oh ! Oh Oh ! The blows were more like beating an Ox, than a woman big with child, Soon after ſhe cried "O Robin, ſpare my life ! don't kill me, for God's ſake—for Chriſt's ſake—for my poor infant's ſake ! Then I heard a ſtruggling and ruſtling towards the window. She gave a lamentable ſhriek, and preſently ſomething ruſhed from the window with ſuch violence, that I thought the window frame had followed, I jumped out of bed, ran to the window and looked out, he ran down ſtairs, and out of doors in his ſhirt ; with a candle in his hand ; his wife was lying in the ſtreet ; he d—d her for a b—h, and ſaid ſhe was drunk, and ſetting the candle down on a bench, he took her by the arms, and dragg d her backwards up the ſteps into the entry, and ſhut the doer. As he was handing her in, I called out. You villain ! you have thrown your wife out of the window, and killed her. The neighbours were alarmed, and came out and ſaid for Chriſt's ſake, don't uſe the poor woman ſo, but let ſomebody he p her, but he would let nobody. When he got her up, I heard ſeveral groans, and thought ſhe might be in labour, for ſhe was ſo near her time, that ſhe looked every hour. But about ſix o'clock ſhe died, and half an hour after, he went and brought a midwife. O you villain ſays I, you have cal ed a midwife now your wife is dead ! about nine, I went in, when the doctor was there, and he ſaid, ſhe had been dead a long time ; her right hand was cut acroſs the fingers, and the window post was bloody with ſtruggling. The priſoner, ſaid, ſee how the

wicked jade has cut her hand with the window glass in getting out, but I looked, and there was not one pane of glass broke, nor any of the glass bloody but only the post.

Several other witnesses were examined, who confirmed the above testimonies.

The Surgeon deposed.—I viewed the body of the deceased. Her arm had three or four bruises like the mark of a kick. There was a wound in the palm of the right hand, above an inch long, and a quarter deep: it seemed to be a slab with a knife, I did not take notice of the small bruises. I, opened the body. The abdomen was full of contused blood. The infant, which was dead, but full grown, was forced out of the womb, all but its feet. I believe the fall was the cause of both her death and the child's.

The prisoner denied the charge, and called several witnesses, who gave him a good character—The Jury found him Guilty—Death.

A friend of his, who visited him in prison, and accompanied him to the place of execution, has favoured us with the following account.

Robert Hallam, was 34 years of age, of honest parents, who lived near him, had a good education served his time at sea, studied navigation, and sometimes he went as mate, and behaved himself always well at sea, an expert, knowing sailor, was a good manager of what he gained, very honest in his dealings, and behaved discreetly, and civil to every body, had a good character in the neighbourhood and was beloved and respected by his acquaintance

About 12 or 14 years ago, he married a wife, the

unfortunate Jane, for whom he died. Then he gave over going to sea, and took to work as a waterman, and had very good business that way, having two boats constantly employed.

Nine years he continued in good friendship with his wife, and his affairs prospered, his wife bore him several children, three of which are still living; He took a public house, the care of which he committed to his wife, while he and his apprentice plied close the business of a waterman. This public house, was the occasion of his ruin; for now there was nothing but jangling & discord between them, mutual jealousies, the great plague of a family arising, after that they never came to a good understanding of one another any more.

He was jealous of his wife, was very cruel to her, though he loved her dearly, On the other hand, she suspected that he went after strange women, and they told her, that he was familiar with a woman, whose husband took it so to heart, that he fell sick, and died; and when he was dying, he said to his wife, your keeping company with such a man has broke my heart; the only request I ask of you, is, that you do so no more. But he dying, his advice was not complied with.

I asked him about these things, he sa'd he had never kept a mistress altho' he could not altogether plead innocence, only that he had not been much guilty that way.

He had while at sea, met with several disasters, he had been four times taken by Algerine Pirates, but always escaped.

The account he gave of the murder was, that

he went out with a company the day before, and coming home pretty late, went directly to bed. But his wife ſat on the bed-ſide, turning her garter in her hand, and not like to go to bed; he deſired her ſeveral times to lay down, ſhe would not, but at length ran to the door, and down ſtairs. He jumped out of bed and overtook her at the ſtreet door, and took her by the neck of the gown, and forced her back into the houſe and then he gave her two or three hearty blows. Upon this, while he was locking the ſtreet-door, ſhe ran up ſtairs, and ſhut the chamber door, with a poker or ſome ſuch thing. He having the candle in his hand, and being in his ſhirt, deſired her to let him in, otherwiſe he threatened to beat her with his cane; but it was hanging on a nail in the chamber where ſhe was. Then he endeavoured to open the door by force, which he at laſt did, and as he was coming in at the door, ſhe threw herſelf out of the window backwards. The fright ſhe was in, for fear of his beating her unmercifully, was the occaſion of her crying out murder! but that he did not ſtrike her that night, except two or three hearty blows, after his dragging her in, when ſhe firſt went out:

His ancient father came to viſit him, he fell on knees, wept and cried moſt bitterly, and inſisted on his innocence, at least of heaving his wife out of the window. But that he was too ſevere, in ſwearing at her, threatening and frightening her out of her wits to death, and beating her in a barbarous cruel and outrageous manner he could not deny.

While under ſentence, he behaved himſelf in a diſcreet manner; he at ſeveral times ſhed tears, but

whether through fear of death, or in evidence of a ſincere repentance, we cannot poſſibly determine, for at other times he did not appeared ſo much affected as one could wiſh.

He declared himſelf penitent, that he hoped to be ſaved by the energy of God, through the merits of Chriſt, and that he heartily forgave all injuries done him, as he expected forgiveneſs.

At the place of execution, he ſhowed a great deal of reſolution, and undaunted courage in his carriage, very deſirous of, and attentive to prayers, and when proper prayers were near a concluſion, deſired that the bleſſed Sacrament might be adminiſtered to him, which was accordingly done in the moſt ſolemn manner.

While the executioner was performing this office. I aſked the unfortunate Hallam, if it was true that he and ſome others had murdered the mate of a ſhip, and thrown him into the ſea, and carried off 700l. which they knew he had about him. He ſaid, it was a moſt ſcandalous and falſe report, for he never was concerned in any ſuch murder.

The executioner having adjuſted the dreadful apparatus, he was launched into eternity.

Thus fell this unfortunate man, who had it not been for jealouſy, and domeſtic broils, might have lived happy with his wife. We hope his fate will operate as a caution to others.

FINIS.

J. Pitts, Printer, Seven Dials,